



MEDIA ADVISORY

VirginiaDOT.org

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GILMERTON BRIDGE PROJECT 95 PERCENT COMPLETE

Weeknight closures extended through project completion in early 2015

CHESAPEAKE, Va. – VDOT is extending weeknight closures at the Gilmerton Bridge through the remainder of the replacement project, which is now scheduled for completion in early 2015. Although the project is approximately 95 percent complete, during this third and final phase, work crews will continue demolition activities of the former Gilmerton Bridge and construct the new bridge protection system.

The original completion date was scheduled for winter 2014. However, unforeseen events have delayed the project resulting in the extension such as:

- Postponement of the 5.2-million-pound lift span float-in due to required barge modifications (float-in operations moved from September 2012 to January 2013)
- A lengthy project delay in February 2013 when workers discovered World War II ordnances in the bascule bridge counterweights. After an investigation by local, state and federal authorities, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers personnel and project crews successfully removed 396 unexploded ordnances from the counterweights.

Finally, additional delays involve the highly complex demolition operation on the former Gilmerton Bridge. The proximity of the old bridge to the adjacent railroad bridge and new bridge requires crews to use mechanical means exclusively. Crews are using equipment, such as 14,000-lb. hammers and guillotine breakers, to remove the massive reinforced concrete footings which are 50 feet long, 40 feet wide and 10 feet thick.

The weeknight bridge closures are necessary to use the large demolition equipment, build the bridge protection system and ensure the safety of work crews and motorists.

The Gilmerton Bridge continues to remain open during peak week-day commuting times and weekends. The bridge is closed during off-peak times, Sunday through Thursday, 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. Motorists are encouraged to use the High Rise Bridge as an alternate route or the South Norfolk Jordan Bridge as a tolled alternative route.

Limiting motorist impact has been a VDOT priority since the project's inception in November 2009. Inventive and resourceful phasing of construction throughout the project allowed for

vehicular and maritime traffic to be maintained while the new bridge was built underneath and over the existing bridge.

The Gilmerton Bridge is owned and operated by the city of Chesapeake and opens on demand under the federal rules and regulations of navigable waters as directed by the USCG.

About the Project

The Gilmerton Bridge Replacement Project on Military Highway in the city of Chesapeake consists of the construction of a new lift span over the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River. The new bridge replaces the double-leaf bascule bridge that was constructed in 1938. The new bridge, 1,908 feet long with a vertical clearance of 35 feet in the closed position and up to 135 feet in the open position, has been designed to ease traffic congestion for the 35,000 vehicles that use the bridge daily and provide taller clearance for enhanced maritime access.

Gilmerton Bridge project managers are available for interviews upon request. Please call VDOT Communications Manager Ron Watrous at 757-925-1660.

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